

come fit Mansions for his holy Spirit to dwell in; to wean us gently and gradually from our Complacency in Earthly Things, which we are too apt to rest in, tho we are sure that we must one day part with them; to convince us of the Vanity of all the Satisfaction which this World affords, and to turn our Thoughts and Expectations towards the Joys of another.

We are by Nature, Indigent Creatures, incapable of our selves to content and satisfy our selves; and therefore are ever looking abroad for somewhat to supply our Defects, and compleat our Happiness. To this End, our Wills, and Affections, run out after every seeming Good here below; but return Empty and Unsatisfy'd always from the pursuit: and therefore cannot but suggest to us the Thought, and possess us with the Desire of some Higher Good, which is their only adequate Object, and in which alone true Joys are to be found. But we have the most feeling Sense and Experience of this Truth, when the Hand of God lyes heavy up-

upon us: Then we plainly discern our own Insufficiency and Weakness; and yet see nothing about, or near us, that can afford us any real Relief; and, therefore, we fly to *Him*, who only can; who is rich in Mercies, and mighty to Save; both able, and willing to stretch himself out to all our Wants, and to fill our Emptiness. Even They, who, in their Prosperity forget God, do yet remember and turn to him, when Adversity befalls them: They, who, whilst the Course of things goes smoothly and happily on, and every Passion of theirs is entertain'd, every Wish is gratify'd, find no room for Thoughts of this kind; but are so taken up with enjoying the Blessings as not to be at leisure to consider the great Author and Bestower of them: even these Persons, do, in the Day of their Distress, take Refuge in Reflections on the Benignity and Goodness of God; and begin then to think of *Him* with some kind of Pleasure (tho' allay'd with Doubts and Fears) when they can with Pleasure think of nothing besides him. How much more shall Devout and Blameless Souls, which have

have never been Strangers to these Considerations, retreat to them, in an Evil Hour, with eagerness, and rest in them with the utmost Satisfaction and Delight? The Acquaintance, which they stand in need of for their Support, is not now first to be made: It has been contracted long ago, and wants only to be renew'd, and apply'd to particular Exigences and Occasions. Happy, extreamly happy are They, who, by the means of a Virtuous Temper, and a Religious Education, have been train'd up in this Acquaintance from their very Youth; that Season of our Age, when the Friendships we enter into are most sincere and True, most Passionate and tender, most Firm and Durable; whilst our Minds were as yet untainted with the Principles, and vicious Customs, and had not drunk in that Contagion from Ill Company, which indisposes us for better; had not made that Friendship with the World, which is Enmity with God.

D

Behold,

Behold, Then was the Day of Salvation. Then was the accepted Time; when God most valu'd the Offer of our Hearts, and we could give them up to him most easily, and most entirely. And when once we have thus Early, and Thoroughly devoted our selves to God, there are no Tryals of our Virtue and Courage so sharp, no Evils so great, but that we can sustain and bear them: for God is our Hope and Strength, a very present Help in Time of Trouble; and, therefore, we resort to Him, on such Occasions, with the utmost Readiness and Confidence, even as a Soldier to a belov'd and loving Parent, or Friend to the Friend of his Bosom; casting all our Care upon Him, as knowing that He careth for us.

I have set God always before me (say good David): He is on my right Hand therefore I shall not fall. And, having set God always before him, what wonder is it if he found the special advantage of such practice

practise, in the time of his Sufferings and Sorrows? And, therefore, thus, in another place, professes of himself, — *When I am in Heaviness, I will think upon God?*

No Man had ever study'd the several Arts of holy Living, with greater care than He, no Man had more diligently practis'd them: His delight was in the Law of God; and in That did he exercise himself Day, and Night. He took heed to his Feet, and order'd all his Steps aright, that he might run the way of God's Commandments. And what, at last, was the great Expedient he pitch'd upon to secure himself in a Regular and Uniform course of Virtue? even This, — To set God always before himself; to watch early and late; to remember him on his Bed, (say) and to think on him when he was waking. He was the Man after God's own Heart; and this was the Chief Method by which he became so: It was This that enabled

him to fulfil the Publick Character of a Religious, Just, and Merciful Prince and Father of his People; and that aw'd him in his Retirements, when the Eyes of Men were far from him: It was This that gave Life, and Wings to his Devotions; that carry'd him through various Difficulties and Temptations; that supported him under all his Troubles and Afflictions. --- *When I am in heaviness* (said he) *I will think upon God; when my Heart is vexed, I will complain to him.*

He might have thought on many other Things, which are usually look'd upon as Reliefs to afflicted Minds: He might have endeavour'd to raise himself by reflecting on the happy Circumstances of his Royal State, on his Power, and Wealth and Worldly Splendor; on the Love and Reverence that was paid him by his Subjects, on his Fame, that was gone out into all

Lands

Lands, and on the Fear of Him that was
fallen upon all Nations; on his potent and
numerous Alliances, his signal Successes
and Triumphs. But He renounces all these
weak and insufficient Supports, and be-
takes himself to That, which was worth
them all, and which alone could Admini-
ster true Comfort to him----- *When I am
in Heaviness, I will think upon God.*
And how can the Pious Sons and Daugh-
ters of Affliction better employ them-
selves, than in looking up to Him that
hath bruised them, and possessing their
souls in Patience, under the same Thought,
with which this good Prince quieted his
Griefs, *because it is Thy Hand, and Thou,
Lord, hast done it?* What Comfort and
composedness of Mind must it afford
them, to consider, that these are the Chastise-
ments of a Kind Father, who means them
for our good, and doth not willingly afflict,
grieve the Children of Men, but even in
his

his Wrath thinketh upon Mercy: and will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it?

Let us imitate the Pattern, which this Royal Sufferer hath set us: Let us follow this Excellent Guide; by laying hold of the Remedy, which he found so successful, in the Day of Visitation. Let us, throughout the whole Course of our Lives, take care to make the Thoughts of God, so present, familiar, and comfortable to us here, that we may not be afraid of appearing Face to Face before Him hereafter. Let us so inure our Minds to those faint Views of Him, which we can attain to in this Life, that we may be found worthy to be admitted into the Blessed Vision of Him in the next; when *in his presence there will be fulness of Joy, and at his Right Hand Pleasures for evermore.*

*To Him, Father, Son, and
Holy Ghost, Three Persons,
and one God, be ascrib'd by
Us, and all Men, all possible
Adoration and Praise, Might,
Majesty, and Dominion, Now,
and for Evermore. Amen.*

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

P. 22. l. 19. for several, read severest.

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*The Misery of Christians without a Foreign State;
And their Happiness with it.*

**Dr. BAKER's
S E R M O N**

Preach'd

At St. JAMES's Chappel

On January the 29th, 1709.

By WILLIAM BAKER, D.D.

Printed by Wm. Sturt's second Son.

L O N D O N,

*Printed by J. Sturt, Second Son, at the Corner of
Fleet-Street, opposite the Royal Exchange.*

SEERMON
Dr. BAKER'S

At St. JAMES'S CHAPPEL
On January the 21st 1799.

8

*The Misery of Christians without a Future State;
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S E R M O N

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Fellow of *Wadham-College* in *Oxford*.

Published by Her Majesty's Special Command.

L O N D O N,
Printed by *J. H.* for *Samuel Crouch*, at the Corner of
Popes-Head-Alley, against the *Royal Exchange*. 1710.

The Misery of Christians without a Future State;
And their Happiness with it.

A
SERMON

Preach'd

At St. James's Chappel

On January the 21st. 1709.



By WILLIAM BAKER, D.D.

Fellow of Wadham College in Oxford.

Published by J. H. Sturges's Special Commission.

LONDON.
Printed by J. H. for Samuel Crowder, at the Corner of
Poet-Head-Alley, against the Royal Exchange. 1720.

I COR. xv. 19.

If in this Life only we have Hope in Christ, we are of All Men most miserable.

THE Design of this Epistle was to stop the Progress of some Pretended Apostles, who had caus'd great Disorders in the Church of Corinth, while St. Paul was absent, by denying his Mission, and corrupting his Doctrine. These new Instructors were probably Jews, and of the Sect of the Sadducees, who asserting that *there is no Resurrection, neither Angel, nor Spirit*, had seduc'd some new Converts into the Disbelief of a future State.

Our Apostle in this Chapter labours to confirm this Essential Article which he had before preach'd, by a great Variety of Arguments: And particularly in the Words of my Text, he reasons from the Absurdity of the contrary Opinion; *If in this Life only we have*
Hope

Hope in Christ, we are of All Men most miserable ; that is, Tho' we justly value our selves above the rest of the World for the Revelation that has been made to us, for being call'd to the Knowledge of God in Christ, yet if there be no Prospect beyond the Grave, if the Advantages we expect in Christ are confin'd to this Life, there is no Sect, no Profession of Men in the World so miserable as Christians.

Indeed the natural Desire of Immortality implanted in us, would make the Thoughts of Annihilation terrible to all Mankind. Who could reflect without Horror and Despair, that he was to lose his very Being with his Breath ; That his Soul was to die with his Body, and both to remain in a State, if I may so call it, of Everlasting Darkness, Oblivion, and Insensibility ?

But as this levels Mankind *with the Beasts that perish*, so it would but level Christians with other Men ; And does not come up to the full Import of the Apostle's Assertion, That *if we had Hope only in this Life, Christians would be of All Men the most miserable.*

In



In order to explain which Words, it will be necessary to premise two things.

I. That this Greater Misery of Christians cannot be imputed to the Natural Tendency of Moral Vertue, the Exercise of which does in every Instance contribute to Men's present Happiness, by preventing those Excesses, which would be either prejudicial to their Health, or ruinous to their Estates, or destructive of their Good Name, and Reputation. Even Humility, Meekness, and Patience, which seem calculated only for Sufferings, tho' they may sometimes occasion Injuries and Affronts from Men of Base and Insolent Tempers; yet, generally speaking, they are Advantageous to those that practise them, it being for the most part a less Evil to Bear an Injury, than 'tis to Resent and Revenge it. Whereas Anger engages Men in Quarrels; Faction and Sedition expose the Authors to the Justice of the Magistrate; Ambition, and Covetousness, Envy, and Malice, are their own Tormentors; And there is not one in the whole Catalogue of Sins, but what tends either

A Sermon Preach'd

ther to remove a Man out of the World, or to make him miserable in it. So far then a Christian has the Advantage; His Religion obliging him to the strict Exercise of those Moral Duties, which are the Principal Instruments and Ingredients of present Happiness.

II. Before we can make a just Comparison between the State of a Christian, and that of an Infidel in this Life, it must be consider'd, That there are some Advantages on one side, and Disadvantages on the other, which are Remov'd, and Destroy'd by the Supposition in my Text, and which therefore ought not to be taken into the Account. It will be necessary to mention only this one; That *if there be Hope only in this Life*, if there be no Belief or Persuasion of another, we must not suppose any of those Disquietudes and uneasy Presages of a future Judgment, which at present so terrify and discompose the Wicked. Here can be no Apprehension of impending Evils, to embitter their present Enjoyments; They may take their Ease, Eat, Drink,

Drink, and be Merry, without Controul, not knowing, nor in the least Fearing, that for any of these things God will bring them into Judgment. On the contrary, The Expectation of a Glorious Immortality, which is now a Continual Feast to Good Men, which fills their Minds with Joy, and Rapture, and can make them Easy in the midst of Torments, must not be reckon'd as a Part of their present Happiness, if there be no Future State, or they have no Hope, or Apprehension of it. These things Premis'd, I think the Greater Misery of Christians, supposing no Life after This, may be ascrib'd to some of these Causes. Either,

1. Because the Profession of Christianity oftentimes exposes Men to the most Bitter Sufferings, and Persecutions. Or,
2. Because a Greater Duty is laid on Christians, than ever Mankind was before oblig'd to. Or,
3. Because a more strict Obedience, and a Greater Perfection is Requir'd of them. Or,
4. Because a Greater Restraint is laid on them, in regard to Temporal Enjoyments.

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1st. The

1st. The Profession of Christianity oftentimes exposes Men to the most Bitter Sufferings and Persecutions.

Both Sacred, and Profane Authors are full of the Hardships, that Attended the First Professors of Christianity, who through many Tribulations entered into the Kingdom of God. Tho' no Religion did ever so Effectually Provide for the Security of Princes, by Teaching Men to be Subject to the Higher Powers, and that, not for Fear, but for Conscience sake, yet was it so little understood at first, and so misrepresented, that it met with all the Opposition, which the Rulers of this World, as well as the Rulers of Darkness, could give it.

And since the Civil Powers in these Parts of the World became Christian, tho' Christianity, as such, has not been Persecuted, yet how apt has Ephraim been to vex Judah, and Judah to vex Ephraim? How often have the several Parties, and Denominations of Christians, for the sake of some Particular Opinions, worried each other even unto Death, in Defiance of their Common Lord, and Master, and to the Scandal of Common Christianity?

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We need not go far for Instances of this kind; We have lately known in a Country Near us, Barbarities Exercis'd on Christians Equal to Any under the Heathen Emperors; And in order to force Men to as Gross Idolatry, and Superstition.

And if it be not quite so stormy, and tempestuous, if Sufferings do not rise so High, yet there is a Perpetual Enmity between the Children of this World, and the Children of Light. As our Saviour foretold his Disciples, *John 15. 19.* That because they were not of the World, but He had Chosen them Out of the World, therefore would the World hate them: A Man of Exemplary Vertue is commonly look'd on with an Evil Eye, for no other Reason, but because He is more Excellent than his Neighbour. This is Elegantly Express'd in the Book of *Wisdom*; He is not for our Turn, say the Wicked, and He is clean contrary to our Doings; He upbraids us with Offending the Law, and objects to our Infamy our Transgressions; His Life is not like other Men's, his Ways are of another Fashion; Therefore let us lie in wait for the Righteous; He is grievous unto us even to Behold.

2dly. A Christian's Duty is of a Greater Compass and Extent; He is Tied to the Observance of More, and Severer Laws than Any Other, and therefore would be in a worse Condition than either Jew, or Gentile, had He Hope only in this Life.

I must again Repeat, That Moral Vertues are commonly, and for the most part Instrumental to present Happiness; But Christianity has made great Additions to, and Improvements of both Natural Religion, and the Law of Moses. This is Evident from our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, at the Solemn Delivery and Publication of his Law. Ye have heard that it was said by them of Old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you, That whosoever is Angry with his Brother without a Cause, shall be in danger of the Judgment: Ye have heard, that it hath been said, An Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not Evil; But whosoever shall smite thee on thy Right Cheek, turn to him the Other also. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt Love thy Neighbour, and Hate thine Enemy; But I say unto you, Love your Enemies; Bless

Bless them that Curse you ; Do Good to them that Hate you ; And Pray for them which despitefully Use you, and Persecute you.

It is our Duty to maintain a constant Poverty of Spirit, and Contempt of the World, in Opposition to all High, and Ambitious Designs ; To regulate our Thoughts, as well as our outward Words and Actions ; And in all things to abstain from the very Appearances of Evil. We are requir'd to contradict our strongest Inclinations, and Desires ; to Forgive the greatest Injuries that are done to us ; And to make Satisfaction for the least, that we do to others ; To be pleas'd with our Condition, however mean ; Thankful for Sufferings, however intolerable ; Ready to take up our Cross, and sacrifice our dearest Interests in this World, and even our very Lives, for the sake of God, and Religion. These, and many others, are the Severe Commands to which a Christian is oblig'd ; And if he offends in any one Point, he is pronounc'd Guilty of All.

3dly. There is a more strict Obedience, and a greater Degree of Perfection requir'd of him.

him. Our Saviour came into the World a Preacher of Righteousness, of Inward Purity; and Universal Charity; He came to Reform our Nature, as well as to Redeem it; And to deliver us not only from the Punishment, but the Dominion of Sin.

And 'tis not enough for us, that we pay a Low Degree of Obedience to his Excellent and Sublime Laws; But we must even *Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness*; We must do *God's Will on Earth, as it is done in Heaven*, with great Zeal, and Ardency of Affection; We must *daily grow in Grace, and every Good Work*; Nor must our Endeavours cease, till we arrive to the *Fulness of the Stature of Christ*; till we are *Perfect, even as our Father which is in Heaven is Perfect*.

A Heathen would think it sufficient not to Act, and Commit the Sins his Inclinations prompted him to; But not to Covet, nor Desire them, nor so much as to Wish himself at Liberty, is a Perfection which Heathen Morality could never reach.

The Jewish Law, tho' of Divine Institution, consisted chiefly in Rites, and Ceremonies,
and

and Outward Actions ; But had little in it to restrain Men's Inward Thoughts and Affections ; And for a great Number of Transgressions, God was pleas'd to accept of the Blood of Bulls, and of Goats, of Sacrifices, and Oblations for an Atonement ; How different is this from that deep Contrition, Humiliation, and Repentance requir'd by the Gospel ? How much easier is it to sacrifice whole Herds of Cattle, when a Man has Wealth enough to purchase them, than to Pull out his Right Eye, and Cut off his Right Hand ; To Pray for his Enemies, and Love them that Hate him ?

So that tho' Circumcision, and other External Performances of the Law, were a Token which neither they, nor their Forefathers could bear, yet certainly Purity of Heart, that spiritual Circumcision enjoyn'd Christians, is infinitely more difficult ; The little Finger of the Son is heavier than his Father's Loins ; And yet, Except our Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, that strictest Sect of the Jews, we shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

of 4thly. Lastly, The Misery of Christians above others, if there be no World to come, may proceed from the greater Restraint that is laid on them in regard to Temporal Enjoyments.

Had we Hope only in this Life, it would be our Wisdom to make the most of it; to pursue Present Happiness with all Diligence, and Application; To gratify, and indulge every Appetite both of Soul, and Body, as far as would consist with our Ease, Health, and other Conveniencies; According to the Apostle's Inference in this Chapter; *If the Dead rise not, let us Eat and Drink, for to morrow we Die.* But a Christian's Life is one continued Conflict, and Struggle with his Inclinations and Desires: There is actually a Civil War within him, *The Spirit warring against the Flesh, and the Flesh against the Spirit.* Now as *He that striveth for the Mastery is Temperate in all things,* so does a Christian allow Himself to tast the Good Things of this Life but very Sparingly, and with Great Reserve; He considers that they are of a bewitching Nature, apt to Engross his Thoughts, and steal upon his Affections;

ons ; To Sink, and Depress his Soul ; To
Disable, and Unqualify it for all Spiritual
Exercises.

Sometimes he abridges Himself of Innocent Pleasures, and Freedoms to avoid giving Offence to others ; But is always careful to maintain the Empire of Reason over his Passions, knowing how apt they are to rebel, and that by every Act of Indulgence they gather Strength. He wisely secures his Conquest by Acts of Abstinence, Mortification, and Self-Denial ; will not come near the Point that separates between Good and Evil, but stops short of what he might lawfully do, knowing how impossible it is to Absolutely to command his Appetites, as to say, *Hiberto shall you go, and no farther.* Some there are that confine these Struggles only to the lower, and imperfect Degrees of Vertue, but will not have them reach a Mature and Confirm'd Habit of it. 'Tis true, in the Beginnings of a good Life, Men find the Greatest Opposition and Reluctance ; And as the Habit of Vertue gets Strength, the Difficulty abates : In this, or that Particular Instance of Vertue, a Man may

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arrive

arrive to that Perfection, as even to take Satisfaction and Pleasure in the Exercise of it.

But if we consider the Duty of a Christian in its whole Latitude and Extent, where is there, otherwise than in Imagination, One that can at All times resist the Importunity of All his Passions with Complacency and Delight? Is not every one, while he is in the Body, subject to some Temptations or other? How else can we account for the many Failings and Infirmities of the very Best Men? That we are commanded to Pray for the Forgiveness of our Trespases, as often as for our Daily Bread? *There is not a just Man on Earth, that doth Good, and sinneth not*: Nor can the Greatest Saint hope to obtain Heaven without Repentance, which supposes Sin.

So that how confirm'd soever a Man may be in Vertue, He will always be, while in this World, in a State of Spiritual Exercise and Warfare; He that has within him a whole *Body of Sin* to destroy, will always find it Work enough to guard against the Danger; And that 'tis necessary He should Deny Himself many Innocent Pleasures of Life, in order

der to Crucify the Old Man, with his Affections, and Lusts.

To sum up what has been said ; If the Profession of Christianity oftentimes Exposes Men to the most Bitter Sufferings, and Persecutions ; And even in Better times, when Kings become Nursing-Fathers, and Queens Nursing-Mothers to the Church ; And by their Bright Example, as well as Wise Laws, give all possible Encouragement to the Cause of Vertue, and Religion ; If notwithstanding this, Good Men are still more obnoxious to the Troubles of Life, to Contempt, and Reproaches, than Others : If their Duty be Improv'd, and Enlarg'd by the Addition of many severe Precepts, and Commands : If a more strict Obedience, and a Greater Perfection be Requir'd of them, than ever Mankind was before Oblig'd to : If Lastly, They are to be Greater Strangers to the Pleasures of Life than other Men ; I think on all these Accounts we must Approve of the Doctrine in my Text, That *if Christians had Hope only in this Life, they would be of All Men most Miserable.*

I have hitherto confin'd my self to the Express Assertion of the Apostle, upon the Supposition mention'd.

But the thing Principally intended in this long Discourse, of which my Text is a Part, is to give Christians a full Assurance of the Resurrection of the Body, and a Life after Death; And to make them sensible of the Privileges and Advantages they enjoy above the rest of Mankind, by having a full Discovery made to them of this Invisible World; Tho' without this Hope of Eternal Life They are the *most Miserable*; yet 'tis suppos'd, and it naturally follows, That having this Hope in them, They are justly to be Esteem'd the most Happy Men in the World. And that for these two Reasons.

1. Because the Belief of a future State is the only Principle that can produce a steady and uniform Obedience, by which Alone this Future Happiness can be attain'd.

2. Because 'tis the Only Consideration that can support us under the Miseries of Life, and the Apprehensions of Death.

1. The

I. The Belief of a Future State is the Only Principle that can produce a steady and uniform Obedience, by which Alone this Future Happiness can be attain'd.

Temporal Interest is too Uncertain a Principle, and a Foundation too Narrow for a Constant, and Universal Obedience. Health, Riches, Reputation, and Honour, and indeed all the Valuable Blessings of Life, are Commonly the Attendants of Vertue; And were they Always so, this would be enough to Recommend it to a Wise Man's Choice, tho' it was Destitute of Any Other Advantage.

But how often are the Rewards of Vertue possess'd by Vice? And what shall secure a Man's Religion, when 'tis for his Interest to be Wicked? The Care of his Reputation may only make him more Cautious, and Reserv'd; But what shall Deter him from the Basest Actions, when there is scarce a Possibility of his being Discover'd? 'Tis no uncommon thing for Flattery, and Hypocrisy, Fraud, and Cunning, Injustice, and Oppression, to be Loaded with the Blessings of Life; These are
the

the Approv'd Arts of too many, who *make Hast to be Rich, and Great.* So that Vice may have its Present Advantages, as well as Vertue; And He that is Resolv'd to pursue his Interest in this World, has no other Foundation for his Religion, but meer Chance, and Contingency.

But the Belief of a future State is a Principle, that will on All Occasions Influence our Practice. Nothing now can stand in Competition with Vertue; No Man that has this Faith in him can have so great Temptations to Sin, as he has Encouragements to Obedience. The Hardships of Vertue, and the Pleasures of Vice will appear little, Trifling, and Inconsiderable to One, who has a full Assurance, That God has prepar'd in Heaven for *Them that Love Him, Things which neither Eye has Seen, nor Ear Heard, nor have they enter'd into the Heart of Man to Conceive.*

2. This is the Only Consideration that can Support us under the Miseries of Life, and Apprehensions of Death.

I hope it will not be thought Time ill-spent a little to Reflect on the Calamities which
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the Greatest Part of Mankind now Actually Suffer ; It may Serve to Cure our Love of the World, and our Fondness for a Life so Full of Troubles ; At least it cannot but Excite our Gratitude to Heaven for our Own Happier Condition, for the Greater Share of Blessings which We Enjoy.

Could we take an Exact View of the several Kingdoms of the Earth, we should be convinc'd, that there is much more Misery in the World, than we at present Imagine. 'Tis no Easy matter to make a People Sensible of this, who are so happily Distant from the Scenes of War, Pestilence, and Famine ; Living in Greater Plenty, and Security, than Any Nation near us ; And under the Happy Influence of a Most Gracious Government. But how many Nations are there in the World *made Mad with Slavery, and Oppression* ? How many Provinces are become almost Desolate by the Rage of a Contagious Disease ? (God of his Mercy Stay the Hand of the Destroying Angel) What Numbers have been made Widows and Fatherless by the Edge of the Sword ? And how many are now ready to
bnA Faint,

Faint, to Die, and Give up the Ghost for want of Bread? These indeed are but Accidental Miseries, such as are not Common at All Times, nor to All Places.

But *Sufficient for the Day of Life is the Necessary, and Inseparable Evil thereof*; Man is Born to Labour, and Sorrow; 'Tis the Condition of his Nature to be Subject to many Wants, and Infirmities, to Poverty, and Disgrace, to Sicknes, and Old-Age. How few are the Happy, and Prosperous, in Comparison to the Poor, and Afflicted, the Persecuted, and Oppress'd? How many are Distracted with Remorse of Conscience, and a *Fearful Looking for of Judgment*? And yet how much Greater is the Number of Careless Sinners, that go on Cheerfully in the Ways that Lead to Death, and who are more Miserable than the Former?

And if we look into the most Gay, and Splendid Condition, we shall find it full of Uneasiness, and Disappointments; The Pleasures of Life, as Unsatisfactory as they are, cannot be Enjoy'd without an Alloy of Cares, of Interruptions, and Ungrateful Mixtures.

And

And if nothing of this should happen, yet the Apprehension of Approaching Death, and the Thoughts of Parting with what Men have, would quite Destroy the Present Enjoyment, and like the Hand-writing on the Wall, make *their Knees smite One against Another.*

Such is our Uncomfortable Condition, if we look no farther than this Present Life; But if we extend our Prospect into the Other World, and view that Eternal State, which is just ready to Begin, and which will Never End, we shall see Abundant Reason to be content with our Present Circumstances, and satisfied with the Dispensations of Providence, however severe. What tho' our Life be Miserable, it is to be but short; And *these light Afflictions which, in comparison to Eternity, are but for a Moment, will, if we make the right Use of them, work out for us a far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory.* The time is at hand, when all Distinction between High and Low, Rich and Poor, shall be taken away; When God shall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes; And there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying; neither shall there
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